

A
LETTER

FROM A
FREEHOLDER in the
County of *Edinburgh*,
TO HIS
FRIEND in EDINBURGH.

My dear Friend,

I Begin this LETTER without any Apology, as well knowing you will neither grudge the Trouble of reading these Lines, nor that of answering them. Though I live in the Neighbourhood of the Town of *Edinburgh*, yet the Poorness of my Health denies me the Pleasure of passing almost any Part of my Time

in it: Two or three Days Residence there shows me that my Constitution is not capable of the stronger Pleasures, and send me back again an unwilling Exile to the Country; but as there is no Pleasure without Pain, so there is no Pain without Pleasure; unable as I am to keep Company with these my Heart loves, and to partake of their Pleasures and Diversions; yet I can go near to satisfy my self with the Thoughts, that as I love you, and some other Friends, so I am (if I mistake not) belov'd by them.—Reflections of this Kind, together with a warm Concern I have for my Country, which leads me to spend a good Part of my Time in reading and enquiring what I can, into the Situation of our publick Affairs: These Occupations, I say, help me off with my Time, and though the latter, I mean our publick Affairs, afford but a gloomy Prospect; yet the Beams of Virtue in particular Persons, that shoot sometimes athwart this profound Darkness, give me an heightned Pleasure, which I really believe owes its additional Strength to the Villany which surrounds it; just as, in Painting, Light is heightned by Shade.

FROM

FROM such general Reflections as these, I was, some Time ago, awakned by a Call to mind my own particular Duty, as an Elector of a Representative to serve in Parliament, for the INDEPENDENT COUNTRY of *Mid-Lothian*. — I have Abundance of Time for Reflection, : so I set my self down to think, not so much indeed, to which of the Candidates named I should give my Vote, as whether I could with a safe Conscience give it to the late Member, who has vacated his Seat, now for the second Time, in order to accept of a new Employment; which, whether he did voluntarily, or was compelled to do, remains still a great Doubt with me; but as you have greater Opportunities of Knowledge, I beg you will inform me of the Truth of that Matter.—My Reason of Doubt is, That I cannot think he would again wantonly put himself upon his County; nor can I think but that his Successor, in his last Place, would have had as much Interest as our present Candidate, to have stepped into this Place, had he chosen it.

BE,

BE that as it will, I shall now proceed, though I should exceed the Bounds of a Letter, to inform you that I am now determined to give my Vote against the present Candidate upon the Court Interest, who was not long ago a Candidate upon the Country Interest: My Reasons, I shall likewise give you, and if you please to shew them to any of our Friends, I do not oppose it.

YOU know, that ever since I came to succeed to this small Estate, which I now possess, I have always given my Vote to the Candidate, who I thought would oppose the Court; and this I did upon a Principle somewhat singular, though, in my Apprehension, not unreasonable. The Lowness of my Health did not allow me to be present at the last Election. The two Parliaments preceeding this, I voted for a Member who opposed the Court, and who I see, in a late printed Letter, dignify'd by the Title of SOMEBODY, an Appellation, which you know we used in our laughing Way, to apply to a Person in a much higher Station.

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THE Reasons why I thought my self bound to oppose the late Ministry (if that may be call'd late, which is now) were plainly these, what influenced others I cannot tell, they best know themselves? In the *first* Place, I was, and am still of Opinion, that the late Minister was too profuse of the publick Money, and did not pay so large a Proportion of the publick Debts, as he might have done, and a Twenty Years Peace, and an easy Administration enabled him to do.—*2do*, That he, through a Pusillanimity, which always affected him in foreign Affairs, suffered the Nation to be insulted and abused by the *Spaniards*, its Trade and Wealth to decrease, and indeed almost to perish; and when, by the Strength of the Opposition, he was at last forced into a *Spanish* War, managed it so poorly, that much Loss and Dishonour redounded to the Nation from such weak Management, of which indeed the Cause was very visible; That, for twenty Years together, he had dispos'd of all Military and Naval Preferments, not to those who knew their Business, but to those who could best procure him a Parliamentary

liamentary Interest.—*3rd*, That Corruption, which before his Time was but a narrow Path, became under his Direction a broad-pav'd Way, easy for all Ministers after him to follow, and perhaps to make it still broader and safer.—And *lastly*, That, in order to gain his M——r's Favour, he too much sacrificed the Interest of his native Country to that of H——r.

SUCH, my dear Friend, were the Reasons that determined me to oppose the late Ministry, these I imbib'd when young, and, if I remember right, were strongly inculcated upon my Mind by this terrible S O M E B O D Y, who now supports, with all his Power, the Candidate for the Court.—The Scheme is now shifted, the Heads of the late Opposition are now melted down into the old Ministry, yet not so as to become one Mettal, for the old is ever and anon throwing out some Piece of the new; and will, in all Probability, in a little Time, free itself entirely from the Mixture.

BUT, be that as it may, if the present Ministry, or call it by what Name you will, does

does not alter these destructive Measures I mentioned above. What avails it me, or my Country, that a few Subalterns are changed, and others put in their Room. What I want of you, who hold a Correspondence with some of our Members of Parliament, is, to inform me, Whether it be true, as is reported, and which, from several Observations I have made, I am apt to believe, That our late Friends are still more profuse of the publick Money than the old Ministry, and that, instead of paying our former Debts, they are running us into a new and greater Debt: That the *Spanish* War is not only neglected, but intirely laid aside, and the Hopes of Peace, and an Increase of Wealth and Trade from that Quarter, by laying Hold of some of the Dominions of that Crown in the *West Indies*, altogether blasted; and they who advised and urged the carrying the War into that Quarter, are now totally silent upon that Head, and attentive only to a War upon the Continent. Neither, if I am rightly informed, are the Wings of Corruption shortned. Alas! We have but too many melancholy Instances of the contrary, melancholy

lancholy to us, but not less so to the Creatures themselves, who are guilty in that Way. What say you, my Friend, to the *H-v-n* Rudder? Does it more or less influence the Councils of *G— B—*? Why? this expensive War upon the Continent? Why do we keep such a monstrous Fleet in the *Mediterranean*, upon the Cost of *Italy*? What has *G— B—* ado with the Treaty of *Worms*? Why these odious and insulting Mercenaries? I am almost out of Breath, and you are laughing at me, unhackney'd as I am in a World with whom these Things go glibly down; But, pray my Friend, are these Things so? I believe them to be so, and therefore have taken my Resolution; inform me if you know better: One Question more, and then, Does our late Member and present Candidate upon the Court Interest, vote along with these Ministers? Does he take Posts and Places from them? Is he one of them? Does he, in general, concur with their Measures? I am told it is so; What say you? For upon the Verity or Falshood of these Facts depends my Vote, which, for any Thing yet known, I am to
give

give against this Candidate; because, I am apt to believe the Facts reported to be true, but am, nevertheless, open to better Information.

THESE are the Reasons that weigh with me in determining my Conduct at the ensuing Election; they have all along weighed with me, and, in my poor Apprehension, have determined nine Parts in ten of the Freeholders of this independent County to vote as they have hitherto done, since I had the Honour of coming among them in the Year 1727. If they still retain the same Principles, and there be still the same Reason for exerting them, of which I think hardly any Man can doubt, they will, without Question shew themselves to be themselves, and that, with honest Men, the same Principles, in the same Circumstances, will always have the same Effects.——In a certain Number of any Kind of Men there will always be some weak and wicked, and that there are such amongst our Electors, I have no Doubt; but that a Majority of Gentlemen entirely independent, will in one Day,

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in one Hour, entirely counteract the whole former Conduct of their Life, and flatly and avowedly contradict the very fundamental Maxims which they have been preaching up and insisting upon, almost ever since they could speak, and which indeed ought to govern every honest Man's Choice of a Representative, I cannot believe. I shall be another *Thomas*, nothing shall make me believe, till I see and feel.

BUT that Reason which is given for supposing only, that the Majority will go the other Way, is to me beyond all Conception. And here again, my Friend, I must apply to you for Information; it is reported, and I will do in this, as in the former Reports, I will believe them till you inform me better: It is reported, I say, That a certain -----intermeddles so strongly in this Election, as not only to condescend to soothe, but to rise to Awe and Threatnings. Tho' I told you before I believed this Report, yet I do not believe it as I do a mathematical Demonstration; Doubts arise. Is it possible that he should know so little of his Duty,

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as to use, or threaten to use that Advantage the Constitution has given him over the rest of the Freeholders? If he knows his Duty and contemns it, does he not know that there is in our Constitution a Remedy for this Evil, for which I want a Name: Will not an Address from a certain House remove him --- from this Advantage? He very well knows, what it may cost a Judge, for making a false Step, by using any Kind of Violence at an Election, having been himself, not long ago, the first Mover of a very hot Pursuit of the same Kind, altho' it proved ineffectual. I am really not thoroughly informed how and by what Means Knowledge of Duty, and a Fear of Danger from deviating, are capable to restrain any Man; so that, without paying any Compliment, or flattering him upon the Goodness of his Heart, there is some Reason to doubt this Report.

BUT, setting aside Considerations I have mentioned, the Folly of the Thing makes me doubt very much; the County, as I take it, is independent in no other Sense,
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than that the Members of it are independent. The Whip is for 'Slaves, but free Men are not to be brought over in that Way: What Answer do you think, my Friend, I should give any Man that would attack me in that Way? I believe it would prevent a second Application, and, I hope, every Elector will have, at least, as much Spirit, as a poor sickly Man, who has not much to raise his Spirit: But if neither the Knowledge of Duty, nor Fear of Danger, can move him, and if he is not wise enough to see the Folly of this Enterprize, let the honest and generous Resentment of the free and independent Electors awaken him with a Whip of Scorpions, and let him know the Difference betwixt Free-men and Beasts of Burden.

BUT, if he is so wise as to distinguish between Men, and to threaten some, while he soothes others; let those, who are threatened, consider, that they are likewise Men; and they, who are sooth'd, reflect, why there is such an extraordinary Change of Temper in the Soother, *quantum mutatus*
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ab illo? That Change of Principle should change the very Man, is strange! — That *Hotspur* should, upon Occasion, become a *Lamb*; That a Court-Colour should sink so deep into a Man's Constitution, is to me inconceivable; I am told, That he has been seen carrying the meanest and poorest (in Spirit I mean) of the Voters along with him to Meetings of his Friends, taking them under the Arm, even in the Street, and every Way guilty of extraordinary Condescension. This indeed is a critical Point, the Greatest must stir their Stumps; the Credit of the Party depends upon it; they are ruined in *England*, if they fail a second Time; nevertheless, the Line of *Shakespear* in the Tragedy of *Julius Cæsar* still forces itself into my Memory;

O! *Mighty Cæsar, Art thou fallen thus low?*

BUT, Are there of our Brethren, who are afraid of future Contingencies of Judicial Evils, which they as yet see not? Let them consider, What Means of Power are
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in the Hands of him, who is supposed willing to inflict these Evils ; Are there not others of equal Knowledge and Skill with him ? Many Men of Probity and Worth. Is there not ONE MAN, whose Integrity is above the Reach of Power, or Corruption of any Kind, whose Abilities are too well known for me to say any Thing of them ; and of whom I may almost say, what a *Roman* Author, was punish'd with Death for, writing of *Brutus*,* That he is *Scotorum ultimus*. Will not he, Will not others investigate and defeat Partiality and Prejudice ; arising from a Cause so mean, and so well known ? Were I just now under the Lash of the Law in any Shape, and were I, what I am not, disposed to make the best of my Vote, without any Regard to Conscience or Honour, I would vote against this Court Candidate in Point of Interest, and expect to come off by raising a Clamour, that I was attack'd purely from Party ; Prejudice, and Partiality. But these Shifts, I thank
 God,

* Tacitus, Lib. 4. Annal. C. 34.

God, I have no Occasion for, and were it so, I am incapable of having Recourse to them.

MY *Dear Friend*, I am now almost as much tired with Writing, as, I dare say, you are with Reading; a Moment's Patience more, and I have done.— I am told, some of our Freeholders are to be neutral; if this Neutrality proceeds from having examined both Sides of the Question, and finding not a Grain more Principle of Determination on one Side than on the other, I have nothing to say, but cannot believe it; sooner shall a Peripatetick Philosopher persuade me, that an Ass will starve between two Bundles of Hay, of equal Size and Figure, than he shall persuade me of this. I take my Leave of Gentlemen, whose distinguishing Faculty is so nice, as to remain perfectly in Suspence, and who are not able to throw the thousand Part of a Grain into any of the Scales.— The *Spartan* Legislator *Lycurgus* made it Death for any Man not to take a Side, where any Question divided the *Common-Wealth*. Is there a
Man

Man, who does not wish we had such a Law
in this Country; and who does not laugh
at the vain Pretences of Neutralists? Vain
and idle in this Respect above all, that
both Parties imagine they hurt them, and
neither Party thanks them for not being a-
gainst them.

ADIEU, *My Dear Friend*, Inform me as
to Facts, and I will take the Point of
Right in my own Hands.

F I N I S.